



## The U.S. vetoes an Arab-backed U.N. resolution demanding an immediate humanitarian cease-fire

By EDITH M. LEDERER  
Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United States on Tuesday vetoed an Arab-backed and widely supported U.N. resolution demanding an immediate humanitarian cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war in the embattled Gaza Strip, saying it would interfere with negotiations on a deal to free hostages abducted in Israel. The vote in the 15-member Security Council was 13-1 with the United Kingdom abstaining, reflecting the strong support from countries around the globe for ending the more than four-month war, which started when Hamas militants invaded southern Israel, killing about 1,200 people and taking 250 others hostage. Since then, more than 29,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's military offensive, according to the

Gaza Health Ministry which says the vast majority were women and children. It was the third U.S. veto of a Security Council resolution demanding a cease-fire in Gaza and came a day after the United States circulated a rival resolution that would support a temporary cease-fire in Gaza linked to the release of all hostages and call for the lifting of all restrictions on the delivery of humanitarian aid. Virtually every council member — including the United States — expressed serious concern at the impending catastrophe in Gaza's southern city of Rafah, where some 1.5 million Palestinians have sought refuge, if Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu goes ahead with his plan to evacuate civilians from the city and move Israel's military offensive to the area bordering Egypt, where Is-



Riyad Mansour, Palestinian Ambassador to the United Nations, speaks during a Security Council meeting at United Nations headquarters, Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2024.

Associated Press

rael says Hamas fighters are hiding. Before the vote, Algeria's U.N. Ambassador Amar

Bendjama, the Arab representative on the council, said: "This resolution stands for truth and humanity

standing against the advocates for murder and hatred."

Continued on next page

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**Continued from Front**

"A vote in favor of this draft resolution is a support to the Palestinians right to life," he said. "Conversely, voting against it implies an endorsement of the brutal violence and collective punishment inflicted against them."

U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said the United States understands the council's desire for urgent action but believes the resolution would "negatively impact" sensitive negotiations on a hostage deal and pause in fighting for at least six weeks.

If that happens, "we can take the time to build a more enduring peace," she said.

The proposed U.S. resolution, Thomas-Greenfield said, "would do what this text does not — pressure Hamas to take the hostage deal that is on the table

and help secure a pause that allows humanitarian assistance to reach Palestinian civilians in desperate need."

What happens next remains to be seen.

The 22-nation Arab Group could take its resolution to the U.N. General Assembly, which includes all 193 U.N. member nations, where it is virtually certain to be approved. But unlike Security Council resolutions, assembly resolutions are not legally binding.

Thomas-Greenfield told the council the United States "will work in earnest in negotiating" on its proposed resolution, leaving time for all council members to comment, "rather than impose an arbitrary deadline for the vote."

The defeated Arab-backed resolution would have demanded an immediate humanitarian cease-

fire to be respected by all parties, which implies an end to the war.

By contrast, the U.S. draft resolution would underscore the Security Council's support for a temporary cease-fire "as soon as practicable, based on the formula of all hostages being released," and call for "lifting all barriers to the provision of humanitarian assistance at scale."

It is the first time the U.S. has used the word "cease-fire," as opposed to cessation of hostilities.

The Arab draft would also have demanded the immediate release of all hostages, rejected the forced displacement of Palestinian civilians, called for unhindered humanitarian access throughout Gaza, and reiterated council demands that Israel and Hamas "scrupulously comply" with international law,



**Algerian Ambassador to the United Nations Amar Bendjama, right, votes to approve a resolution concerning a ceasefire in Gaza while Linda Thomas-Greenfield, United States Ambassador to the U.N., left, looks on during a Security Council meeting at United Nations headquarters, Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2024.**

**Associated Press**

especially the protection of civilians.

Without naming either party, it would have condemned "all acts of terrorism" and reiterated the council's "unwavering commitment" to a two-state solution with two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side in peace. In measures sure to anger Israel — and reinforce differences and tensions between U.S. President Joe Biden and Israel's Netanyahu — the U.S. draft resolution reiterates the same unwavering commitment to a two-state solution, which the Israeli leader opposes. Biden has repeatedly called on Israel to protect Palestinian civilians, and the draft resolution says Israel's planned major ground offensive in Rafah "should not proceed under current circumstances."

And it warns that further displacement of civilians, "including potentially into neighboring countries," a reference to Egypt, would have serious implications for regional peace and security.

In another criticism directed at Israel, the U.S.

draft "condemns calls by government ministers for the resettlement of Gaza and rejects an attempt at demographic or territorial change in Gaza that would violate international law."

While this was the third U.S. veto of a Security Council resolution demanding an immediate cease-fire, the council has adopted two resolutions on Gaza where the U.S. abstained.

Its first resolution, on Nov. 15, called for "urgent and extended humanitarian pauses" in Gaza to address the escalating crisis for Palestinian civilians during Israel's aerial and ground attacks.

On Dec. 22, the council adopted a watered-down resolution calling for immediately speeding aid deliveries to hungry and desperate civilians in Gaza, but without the original plea for an "urgent suspension of hostilities" between Israel and Hamas.

It did call for "creating the conditions for a sustainable cessation of hostilities." The steps are not defined, but diplomats said it was the council's first reference to stopping fighting. □



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# White House promises 'major sanctions' on Russia in response to Alexei Navalny's death

By **ZEKE MILLER** and **FATIMA HUSSEIN**

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The White House said Tuesday it is preparing additional "major sanctions" on Russia in response to opposition leader Alexei Navalny's death last week in an Arctic penal colony.

National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said the sanctions, on the eve of the two-year anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, "will be a substantial package covering a range of different elements of the Russian defense industrial base, and sources of revenue for the Russian economy that power Russia's war machine, that power Russia's aggression, and that power Russia's repression." National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said the U.S. had not determined how Navalny had died, but insisted that the ultimate responsibility lay with Putin.

"Regardless of the scientific answer, Putin's responsible for it," he told reporters. Russian authorities have said the cause of Navalny's death is still unknown and have refused to release his body for the next two weeks as the preliminary inquest continues, members of his team said. The Treasury Department declined to comment on the details of the upcoming sanctions. Brian Nelson, the department's Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence, is in Europe this week to continue working on Russia sanctions ahead of the invasion's two-year anniversary.

"The global coalition imposing unprecedented sanctions on Russia's war machine has thrown sand in the gears of the Kremlin's efforts to equip and supply its military. President Biden recently expanded Treasury's authorities to target those funding Russia's war production efforts even if they're located in third countries and Treasury is aggressively pursuing those



National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan speaks during a press briefing at the White House in Washington, Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2024.

Associated Press

who attempt to evade our sanctions," the Treasury department said last week. "Multilateral sanctions and export controls have forced hard tradeoffs for Putin and damaged his ability to project power now and in the future."

So far, the U.S. and its allies have sanctioned thousands of Russian people and firms, frozen Russian Central Bank funds, banned certain Russian goods, restricted Russian banks' access to SWIFT the dominant system for global financial transactions and imposed a \$60-per-barrel price cap on Russian oil and diesel, among other measures. Policy experts have advanced an array of proposals meant to further starve Russia of the money it needs to continue its invasion from seizing the nation's Central Bank funds housed largely in Europe to lowering the Group of Seven price cap in Russian oil. A February working paper from the International Working Group on Russian Sanctions at Stanford University calls for heavier sanctions in Russia's energy market from lowering the current \$60 price cap on Russian-produced oil to \$30, as well as completing the EU and G7 ban on Russian hydrocarbons.

Asked about more sanc-

tions on Russia during a Council on Foreign Relations media briefing Tuesday, Stephen Sestanovich, a senior fellow for Russian and Eurasian studies at the organization, said "the choices are rather limited but it's not zero."

Sestanovich said it is also possible that the U.S. and allies could lower the price cap on Russian oil, since it is an area where "the U.S. and EU have not been particularly aggressive."

"They could try to go lower and put the squeeze on and force the Russians to sell more oil at a discount," he said, adding that he anticipates the U.S. to impose more personal sanctions on Russian officials. □

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## 2 adults are charged with murder in the deadly shooting at Kansas City's Super Bowl celebration

By NICK INGRAM and MARGERY A. BECK

Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) —

Missouri prosecutors said Tuesday that two men have been charged with murder in last week's shooting that killed one person and injured 22 others after the Kansas City Chiefs' Super Bowl parade.

Dominic Miller and Lyndell Mays are charged with second-degree murder and other counts. They have been hospitalized since the shooting, Jackson County prosecutor Jean Peters Baker said during a news conference. Officials declined to answer whether the men were being treated for gunshot wounds or other injuries.

Court records lay out a basic view of how the shooting unfolded.

The men did not know each other before the shooting, according to prosecutors. They were among several people arguing when Mays "pulled his handgun first almost immediately" and several others did the



Law enforcement personnel clear the area around Union Station following a shooting at the Kansas City Chiefs NFL football Super Bowl celebration in Kansas City, Mo., Wednesday, Feb. 14, 2024.

same, Peters Baker said. Police say it was Miller's gun that fired the shot that killed a woman.

Online court records did not list attorneys who could comment on the men's behalf. The Missouri State Public Defender's Office said applications for public defenders for the men had

not yet been received by the Kansas City office.

The new charges come after two juveniles were detained last week on gun-related and resisting arrest charges. Authorities said more charges were possible.

"I do want you to understand we seek to hold ev-

ery shooter accountable for their actions on that day. Every single one," Peters Baker said. "So while we're not there yet on every single individual, we're going to get there."

Police have said a dispute among several people led to the shooting, which happened even as 800 police

officers patrolled the celebration.

The 22 people injured range in age from 8 to 47, according to police Chief Stacey Graves. Lisa Lopez-Galvan, a mother of two and the host of "Taste of Tejano," was killed.

The shooting was the latest at a sports celebration in the U.S. A shooting wounded several people last year in Denver after the Nuggets' NBA championship. That led Kansas City Mayor Quinton Lucas to wonder whether it's time to rethink championship celebrations, even as he promised last week that the city will continue to celebrate its victories. □

Next month's St. Patrick's Day parade will go on as scheduled, Lucas said.

The Kansas City shooting occurred in a state with few gun regulations and a city that has struggled with gun violence. In 2020, Kansas City was among nine cities chosen by the U.S. Justice Department in an effort to crack down on violent crime. □

Associated Press

## American Airlines is raising bag fees and changing how customers earn frequent-flyer points

By DAVID KOENIG

AP Airlines Writer

DALLAS (AP) —

American Airlines is raising the cost of checking bags and it is making other changes to push customers to buy tickets directly from the airline if they want to earn frequent-

flyer points.

The airline said Tuesday that checking a bag on a domestic flight will rise from \$30 now to \$35 online and \$40 if purchased at the airport. The fee for a second checked bag will rise from \$40 to \$45 both online and

at the airport.

American last raised bag fees in 2018.

American, based in Fort Worth, Texas, introduced bag fees in 2008 \$15 back then to cope with the rising cost of jet fuel. Since then, they have become a steady revenue source for most major U.S. carriers. American easily led the industry by raising \$1.4 billion in bag fees in 2022, the last year for which U.S. Transportation Department figures are available.

The airline is also raising bag fees by \$5 for short international flights including those to Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean now \$35 for the first bag and \$45 for the second.

The airline will generally allow customers to check at least one bag free if they hold elite status in Ameri-

can's loyalty program, buy a premium-class ticket or use an American-branded credit card.

American will give a break to customers whose bags are slightly overweight or oversized. Instead of being hit with the full extra fee ranging from \$100 to \$650 graduated fees will start at \$30 for bags that are no more than 3 pounds (1.36 kg) or three linear inches over the limits.

And it is cutting the cost of transferring points between frequent-flyer accounts.

At the same time, American announced that starting with tickets issued on May 1, customers will have to buy tickets directly from the airline or its partner carriers or from preferred online travel agencies if they want to earn points in its AAdvantage loyalty

program. The airline said it will list the preferred travel agencies in late April. Corporate travelers won't be affected.

About 60% of American's ticket sales are already made directly through the airline, said Scott Chandler, vice president of revenue management.

The changes are part of a long shift by airlines away from using travel agents and paying them commissions and bringing ticket sales in-house.

"The old way of booking a ticket relied on agents having a ton of experience and understanding product attributes," Chandler said in an interview. "The old technology doesn't let us explain things very well, and it is a little more confusing for customers when we introduce new products." □



American Airlines planes sit on the tarmac at Terminal B at LaGuardia Airport, Jan. 11, 2023, in New York.

Associated Press

## Ransomware group LockBit is disrupted by a global police operation that includes 2 arrests

By JILL LAWLESS and KELVIN CHAN

Associated Press

**LONDON (AP)** — Law enforcement agencies have infiltrated and disrupted the prolific ransomware syndicate LockBit that has extracted \$120 million from thousands of victims around the world, with two people arrested, British, U.S. and European officials said Tuesday.

Britain's National Crime Agency, or NCA, said it led an international operation targeting LockBit, which provides ransomware as a service to so-called affiliates who infect victim networks with the computer-crippling malware and negotiate ransoms. The operation resulted in the arrests of two people in Poland and Ukraine and the seizure of 200 cryptocurrency accounts, officials said at a joint news conference. The Justice Department, meanwhile, unsealed indictments against two more people, both Russian nationals.

Authorities said they gained "comprehensive access" to LockBit's systems, taking control of infrastructure



**U.S. Attorney Philip Sellinger, second left, and Graeme Biggar, director general of Britain's National Crime Agency, center, are among law enforcement officials appearing at a press conference to outline the details of a law enforcement operation against the ransomware syndicate LockBit in London, Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2024**

and obtaining keys to help victims decrypt their data. "We have hacked the hackers," said the NCA's director general, Graeme Biggar. "LockBit has been locked out." Hours before the announcement, the front page of LockBit's dark-web

leak site was replaced with the words "this site is now under control of law enforcement," alongside the flags of the U.K., the U.S. and several other nations. The message said the NCA was "working in close cooperation with the FBI and the international law en-

forcement task force, Operation Cronos." The ongoing operation also involves agencies from Germany, France, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, among others, including Europol, it said. LockBit, operating since 2019, has been the most

prolific ransomware syndicate two years running. The group accounted for 23% of the nearly 4,000 attacks globally last year in which ransomware gangs posted data stolen from victims to extort payment, according to the cybersecurity firm Palo Alto Networks.

LockBit has been linked to attacks on the U.K.'s Royal Mail, Britain's National Health Service, airplane manufacturer Boeing, international law firm Allen and Overy and China's biggest bank, ICBC.

Ransomware is the costliest and most disruptive form of cybercrime, crippling local governments, court systems, hospitals and schools as well as businesses. It is difficult to combat as most gangs are based in former Soviet states and out of reach of Western justice.

Tuesday's announcement brings to five the number of people the U.S. has indicted since the operation began. Three Russians were previously indicted, with two of those taken into custody, one in Canada and one in the U.S. The rest are still wanted. □

Associated Press

## Milan bans heavy vehicles, imposes antismog measures during bout of bad air pollution

**MILAN, Italy (AP)** — Italy's northern Lombardy region imposed severe antismog measures across Milan and eight surrounding provinces Tuesday to combat a particularly bad period of air pollution.

The measures bar heavy motor vehicles from operating during the day and impose limits on heating and industrial agricultural activities in the nine provinces.

A lack of rain and wind has exacerbated air pollution levels in Italy, particularly in the mostly land-locked and industrial northern Po River Valley. Parts of the Italian peninsula are frequently hit by periods of bad air quality in winter, thanks to a

combination of low rainfall, industrial and vehicle emissions and mountain ranges that trap the smog.

Overall, Italy leads Europe for deaths attributed to atmospheric pollution with around 80,000 deaths a year, according to the Italian Society for Environmental Medicine.

In announcing the restrictions, the regional government cited levels of particulate matter above accepted levels and weather forecasts indicating the smog won't lift anytime soon.

Italian environmentalist group Citizens for Air said the situation is severe and requires strict measures to limit vehicular, heating and

farming pollution.

"Current pollution thresholds are fully unsatisfactory to protect our health, this is what the World Health Organization says," said said Anna Gerometta, head of Italy Citizens for Air campaign.

The Italian government recently approved a decree to allow several northern Italian regions, among the most polluted in the country, to postpone a ban on diesel cars on the grounds that consumers and businesses couldn't transition so quickly to low-emission or zero-transmission cars.

In imposing the antismog measures Tuesday, Lombardy officials nevertheless insisted the situation overall

was improving on the basis of annual data.

Lombardy's assessor for environment and climate, Giorgio Maione, said particulate matter levels had

fallen over 20 years and that investments in sustainable energy renovations over the past five years have amounted to 19 billion euros. □



**Athletes take a break as they run at the San Siro hill and look at the view skyline of Milan, Italy, Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2024.**

Associated Press

## El Salvador's Bukele wins supermajority in Congress after painstaking vote count

By **MARCOS ALEMÁN** and **MEGAN JANETSKY**  
Associated Press

**SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (AP)** — El Salvador President Nayib Bukele and his New Ideas party have won the supermajority the leader needs in Congress to govern as he pleases, electoral officials announced Monday.

The announcement comes after a painstaking vote counting process, which has raised the hackles of electoral watchdogs and the country's weak opposition, who cite irregularities. Bukele handily won re-election Feb. 4 with 84.7% of the vote. What had remained up in the air was if Bukele's New Ideas party would be equally as successful in legislative elections. On Monday, officials announced that New Ideas won 54 seats of the 60 congressional seats. Allied parties won an additional three seats. Despite not having the final results, the leader had already declared victory in the presidency and in the congress the night of the election, saying "El Salvador has broken all the records of all democracies



El Salvador President Nayib Bukele, left, accompanied by his wife Gabriela Rodriguez, wave to supporters from the balcony of the presidential palace in San Salvador, El Salvador, after polls closed for general elections on Sunday, Feb. 4, 2024.

in the entire history of the world." "Never has a project won with the number of votes we have won today," Bukele said. "It is literally the highest percentage in all of history."

Now with the vote actually certified the supermajority effectively gives the self-described "world's coolest dictator" even firmer con-

trol of all three branches of government. The 42-year-old leader is massively popular in El Salvador due to his war on the country's gangs, which resulted in a sharp drop in violence. But Bukele has also been accused of undemocratic moves, including carrying out an electoral reform that critics say stacked the vote

in favor of his New Ideas party, particularly in legislative and local elections. Last year, the congress passed electoral reforms that reduced the number of seats in the unicameral chamber to 60 from 84, a move expected to favor New Ideas. Bukele needs congress to continue emergency mea-

asures approved month-to-month for his gang crackdown. Previously, the leader clashed with opposition parties in congress blocking his initiatives, even showing up to congress with armed military officers.

"Now, he doesn't need any other party," said Eduardo Escobar, a lawyer with the nongovernmental organization Citizen Action who explained that before the election Bukele would at least have to pull on support from allied parties. Congressional control will also potentially allow him to alter the constitution — which bans leaders from holding consecutive terms to stay in power.

While constitutional lawyers argue it's illegal to make such changes, Bukele already sparked controversy by running for reelection. His party's majority in congress and a friendly court they stacked allowed him to dodge the constitutional ban. In an interview with the Associated Press earlier this month, Bukele's vice president left the possibility of seeking a third term open if the country's constitution is changed. □

Associated Press

## Putin says Russia has no intention of putting nuclear weapons in space, denying U.S. claims

**MOSCOW (AP)** — Russian President Vladimir Putin declared Tuesday that Moscow has no intention of deploying nuclear weap-

ons in space, claiming that the country has only developed space capabilities similar to those of the U.S. Putin's statement follows

the White House confirmation last week that Russia has obtained a "troubling" anti-satellite weapon capability, although such a weapon is not operational yet. White House national security spokesman John Kirby said it would violate the international Outer Space Treaty, but declined to comment on whether the weapon is nuclear-capable.

The treaty signed by more than 130 countries, including Russia, prohibits the deployment of "nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction" in orbit or the stationing of "weapons in outer space in any other manner." The White House

said it would look to engage the Russians directly on the concerns.

"Our position is quite clear and transparent: we have always been and remain categorically opposed to the deployment of nuclear weapons in space," Putin said. "Just the opposite, we are urging everyone to adhere to all the agreements that exist in this sphere." Speaking during a meeting with his defense minister, Sergei Shoigu, Putin noted that Russia has only developed space capabilities that "other nations, including the U.S. have." "And they know it," he added.

"We haven't deployed any nuclear weapons in space

or any elements of them to use against satellites or to create fields where satellites can't work efficiently," Shoigu said.

Shoigu alleged that the White House could have made the allegations of a new Russian space capability in order to force Congress to support aid for Ukraine and also encourage Moscow to reenter nuclear arms control talks that Russia has suspended amid the tensions with the U.S. over Ukraine.

Putin didn't rule out possible future contacts with the U.S., but reaffirmed his view that Washington's push for Russia's defeat in Ukraine makes them impossible for now. □



Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, listens to Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu during their meeting at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia, Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2024.

Associated Press



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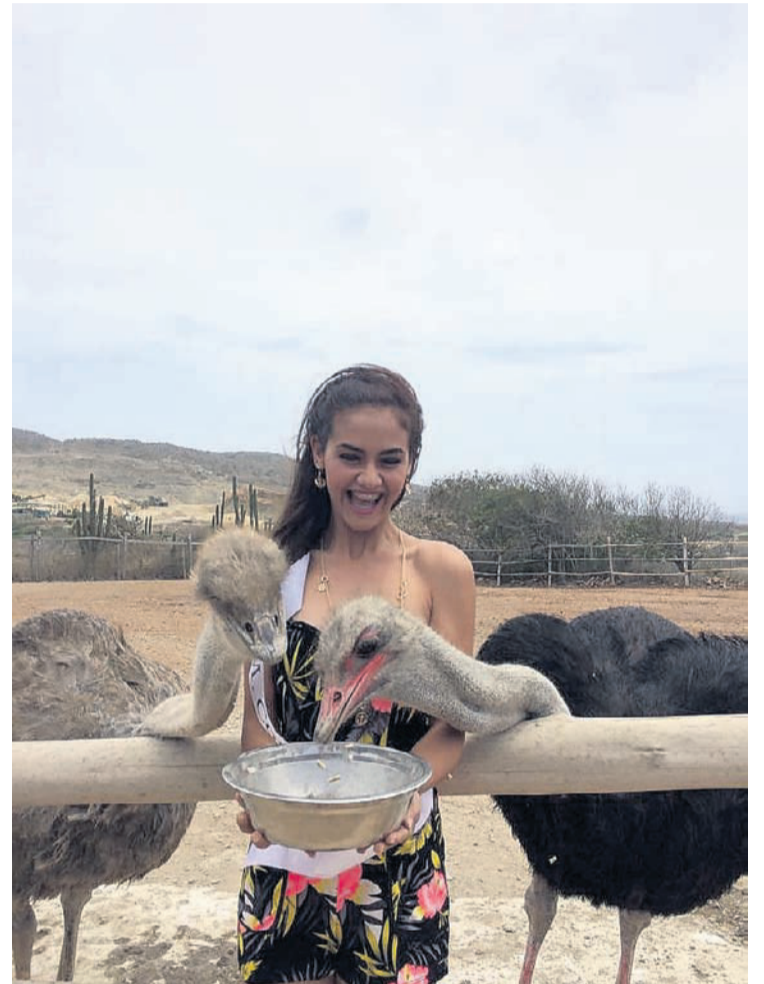
and emus, including a trip to the incubators and the bird kindergarten, housing baby ostriches, baby emus, chicken and ducks, and even a land turtle!

poked around, before collapsing on the ground in a heap of feathers, allowing him to mount her, shaking, winding and spiraling his head in all direction!

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**Blackstone Beach**

(Oranjestad)—Named after its most recognizable feature, the Blackstone Beach almost represents the opposite of the typical Aruban beaches. For one, it has black sand and is covered in black smooth stones. Secondly, it lies on the northern side of the island, away from the white sandy beaches of in the southern region. So, if you feel up for something different—or if it's opposite day, visit the Blackstone Beach.

the more natural side of Aruba: the stones that cover the beaches and the shape of it has been crafted for thousand years via volcanic eruptions, coral reef movements and wave activity of the rural northern part of the island.

Located further east to the Natural Bridge and Andicuri Beach, the Blackstone Beach is relatively easy to access. Once you get passed the Ayo Rock Formation, take the Andicuri road leading up to Andicuri

Beach. There, you can park your car and take a 1km hike towards Blackstone Beach.

This beach forms part of the Arikok National Park and is therefore a site that is preserved. This is why it is also relatively untouched by commercial influences. Despite being called a beach, do note that it is not advised to swim in the water, as the current is very strong and can easily stray you further in the wild ocean. However, you can still enjoy a spectacular view of



the stones and the northern take a picture with your ocean that stretches out friends or family! in front of the beach and

**Aruba Tourism Authority honors loyal visitors at Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort!**

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Distinguished Visitors of Aruba. These visitors were respectively honored with certificates acknowledging their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

- Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Distinguished Visitors Mr. Jeff & Mrs. Denise Urban from Illinois, United States.

Ms. Marouska Heyliger representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of the Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort bestowed the certificate to the honorees, presented them with gifts, and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

Top reasons for returning to Aruba, provided by the honorees were:

- "The Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort & staff."
- Aruba's fantastic

- weather.
- Aruba's beautiful beaches.
- Aruba's safety.
- Aruba's restaurants.

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island".



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## Experience Unrivaled Excitement and Win Big at LIV Casino, Barceló Aruba



Oranjestad – Get ready to indulge in thrilling gaming experiences and a chance to strike it rich at LIV Casino, nestled within the luxurious Barceló Aruba resort. With a wide array of games and a captivating atmosphere, LIV Casino promises an unforgettable entertainment journey for visitors seeking excitement and good fortune.

LIV Casino boasts an impressive selection of 123 slot machines, each waiting to make someone a lucky winner. Among these, 114 are Dollar machines and 9 are Florin machines cater to various preferences and betting levels, offering a diverse gaming experience that suits every player's style.

The casino is not just about slots – for those who relish the thrill of traditional table games, LIV Casino delivers on every front. Step up to the challenge at the Blackjack Table, where strategy meets chance, or take a spin at the Roulette Table for an electrifying game of luck. Additionally, the Three Card Poker Table offers a unique blend of strategy and excitement, adding a new dimension to the gaming floor.

Adding to the anticipation, every table at LIV Casino features its own progressive jackpot, promising the potential for monumental winnings that could change a player's life in an instant.

The gaming action at LIV Casino comes alive from 11 AM to 3 AM, ensuring non-stop excitement throughout the day and into the night. For those looking to experience the thrill of table games, the tables are open from 4:30 PM until closing, inviting players to try their hand at a variety of games while enjoying the vibrant casino ambiance.

"Try your luck with us at LIV Casino at Barceló Aruba," encourages Marc Charley, Casino General Manager of LIV Casino. "We have crafted an environment where guests can immerse themselves in the thrill of gaming and experience the rush of winning big. Whether you're a seasoned player or a beginner, our diverse selection of games caters to all prefer-

ences."

LIV Casino at Barceló Aruba stands as a hub of entertainment, where visitors can not only try their luck but also revel in the world-class amenities and hospitality that the Barceló brand is renowned for.

### About LIV Casino, Barceló Aruba:

LIV Casino, located within the lavish Barceló Aruba resort, offers a premier gaming experience on the stunning island of Aruba. With a wide range of slot machines and table games, as well as the allure of progressive jackpots, LIV Casino provides endless entertainment for both novice and seasoned players. The casino operates from 11 AM to 3 AM, while table games are available from 4:30 PM till closing.



## Ayo & Casibari: Aruba's famous rock formations

(Oranjestad)—The Ayo and Casibari Rock Formations are known locally as one of the crucial sites to have in your "off-road" trip itinerary. These naturally formed rock formations as just one of the few places on the island that hold a rich history of our culture and of our ancestors.



The Ayo Rock Formation

### Ayo

The Ayo Rock Formation is located in the northern part of the island, right on the road that leads you to the Black Stone Beach, and close to the Natural Bridge. The Ayo is a fenced terrain that consists of several giant boulders, resting neatly on top of or side by side each other, adding gorgeous natural architecture to the surrounding "mondi"\*. This is also one of the few sites to contain prehistoric markings of our indigenous ancestors. The Ayo Rock formation contains stairs that lead you to the top of the highest boulder, offering a breath-taking view of the Aruban backyard. The Ayo is usually quiet, as it is situated farther away from the busier parts of the island. However, this is just another charm of the site: the quiet area and the refreshing breeze offer a sense of comfort and peace.

### Casibari

Probably the busier rock formation site, the Casibari is situated more in the center of the island, much closer—and more accessible—to

the general public. Just like Ayo, Casibari is a fenced area containing several boulders that lay on top or lean on each other. The best aspect of the Casibari Rock Formation is the accompanying view when you climb up the top of the round, flat bolder. For this position, you can see the majority of the island and the ocean in the south. Right in front of the entrance, there is the Casibari Café and Grill, a great place to get refreshments and snack before continuing your off-road adventure!

Both sites are open free to the public, 24 hours a day. However, unless you are taking a trip with a professional tour guide, there are no guides at the sites to help you climb the rock. So, do be careful when trudging on the boulders, and make sure to befriend any roaming goats you see along the way!

\*Mondi: what we call our Aruban wilderness. We don't have forests, or deserts, but we do have mondi!



Article by Etnia Nativa

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## Ancient Aruban burial practices

Each week, Island Insight shares an Aruban story with you through the eyes of Etnia Nativa, who welcomes island visitors with an experience way beyond tourist attractions. We link readers with the mystical aspects of the island, its native culture, and its traditional heritage. In this episode, we elaborate on how natives buried their dead before and during the early colonization period.

Throughout history, man has provoked and forged his form of existence within his natural environment. He learned about his ecosystem and how to adapt to it, which enriched his civilization. Caring for the dead was also a very important part of life, and that was no different in Aruba.

When we look at how each group or tribe cared for their deceased, we find that our Aruba ancestors also performed their special ceremonies of devotion, respect, and emotional support. Caring for her deceased relatives was an honor for those who performed such ceremonies. Much of their social and political organization can be traced and determined from archaeological finds. By studying the finds of their tombs, a differentiation in their status and hierarchy can be established for each individual based on the artifacts that were placed with the dead. The inhabitants of the larger villages practiced four

to five different forms of burial. These differences undoubtedly represent social differences in these Caquetio or Dabajuroide communities. The background of the recorded differences has remained a mystery until now. Differences that, without a doubt, are evidence of the status of individuals, families, or groups within the community belonging to their complex political organization.

The dead were buried in large clay pots in the ground within the village premises. Some had special gifts that should serve the spirit in their journey to the world of the dead. Others did not contain any distinguishable artifacts with the naked eye. Not meaning they were buried without gifts, since some of what could be given could have perished in time without leaving any visual trace for us. Gifts that were found were part of a burial that was deposited in large ceramic urns, what we call direct burial urns. In fact, some of the dead are buried twice. The corpse is first buried in the ground, and after months or even years, the bones are excavated,

cleaned, and ready for the second ceremony. These bones or skeletal remains subsequently obtain their permanent resting place in a fairly small vessel. If, after such a procedure, the bones are buried in large container urns, the archaeologist may or could misinterpret it as direct urn burial.

We have a fairly clear idea of the whole process of burial in secondary urns from existing descriptions of such "double" burials. They are practiced to this day by the Guajiros, an arawakan-speaking indigenous tribe residing on the peninsula of the same name on the border between Venezuela and Colombia. More comparisons can be made between the Guajiro and the pre-Columbian population of Aruba, such as their environment, food, and religion, which had everything to do with how the natives, particularly from this area, related to the world of their ancestors, the dead, and beyond. Each of our deceased relatives receives devoted care to initiate their spiritual journey through the underworld and into the land of their dead ancestors and friends. There is evidence that our native people, in addition to these types of burials within the village, also had burials performed in caves and outside of the village.

The benefits of preserving the native culture are enormous, critical to keeping the island's history alive, and essential to keeping our ancestral identity alive. We encourage you to check out the weekly educational online episodes through Island-Insight, written by Etnia Nativa, the more complete cultural blog, which will definitely show you Aruba from a different perspective.

If you are interested in connecting and really know all about your travel destination—our flora, fauna, geology, history, autochthonous art, as well as the true identity of the island—you should book a visit to Etnia Nativa, a unique native gem! Let Anthony, our acclaimed cultural columnist, guide and lecture you regarding the most interesting and revealing stories about Aruba's undiscovered native ethnicity, an adventure beyond beaches and tourist traps. Visit his magnificent dwelling that integrates reused materials with nature, bursting with culture and island heritage! Whats App +297 592 2702 etnianativa03@gmail.com

Excavated ancient Indian pottery in the Hooiberg area. (photo RVD. The Hague)



**CROSSWORD**

By **THOMAS JOSEPH**

**ACROSS** 40 Make

1 Serious amends

6 Theater 41 Theater failure unit

10 Rolling 42 Slugger landscape Barry

11 "My Fair Lady" lady

12 To any extent

13 Labyrinth-building king

14 Blocks up

15 Gadget protector

16 Music's Yoko

17 Caterer's pot

18 Notice

19 Sign on a truck

22 Euro division

23 Final, e.g.

26 Byway

29 Towel word

32 Fuming

33 Use deceit

34 Nevertheless

36 Course activity

37 Stone unit

38 Marisa of movies

39 Kitchen need

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C	A	T	A	L	O	N	I	A	N	S
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D	E	P	O	T	D	O	L	E	S	

Yesterday's answer

**DOWN**

1 Sundial reading

2 Ship in 1912 headlines

3 Stylish

4 Miseries

5 Cable modem

6 Move like a moth

7 Script makeup

8 UV stopper

9 Cut's counter-part

11 Came forth

15 Old hand

17 Last

21 German article

24 Wise king

25 Concluding part

27 Week part

28 Stands up to

29 Bad writers

30 Laughable

31 Iraq neighbor

35 Float on the breeze

36 Attend

38 Bar bill

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10					11			
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			26	27				28
29	30	31		32			33	
34			35			36		
37						38		
39						40		
41						42		

2-21

A X Y D L B A A X R  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

**2-21 CRYPTOQUOTE**

Q V P L D N N G I A P I E P P O Q U

F D U Q N N D C Q U L S W C D F S R

D W P X U O L E S J Q L K E S U R L P F S .

— M D K J J S W P X D K

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: I WISH YOU TO KNOW THAT YOU HAVE BEEN THE LAST DREAM OF MY SOUL. — CHARLES DICKENS

**U.S. casinos won \$66.5B in 2023, their best year ever as gamblers showed no economic fear**

By **WAYNE PARRY**  
Associated Press  
ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP)

— America's commercial casinos won \$66.5 billion from gamblers in 2023, the industry's best year ever, according to figures released by its national trade association Tuesday. The American Gaming Association said that total was 10% higher than in 2022, which itself was a record-setting year. When revenue figures from tribal-owned casinos are released separately later

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this year, they are expected to show that overall casino gambling brought in close to \$110 billion to U.S. casino operators in 2023. □

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- 1 Bed Ocean View \$14,500

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## Beatles to get a Fab Four of biopics, with a movie each for Paul, John, George and Ringo

By JAKE COYLE  
AP Film Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — The Beatles are getting the big-screen biopic treatment in not just one film, but a Fab Four of movies that will give each band member their own spotlight — all of which are to be directed by Sam Mendes.

For the first time, the Beatles, long among the stingiest rights granters, are giving full life and music rights to a movie project. Sony Pictures announced Monday a deal that may dwarf all music biopics that have come before it, with the stories of Paul McCartney, John Lennon, George Harrison and Ringo Starr spread out over a quartet of films. The films, conceived by Mendes, are expected to roll out theatrically in innovative fashion, with the movies potentially coexisting or intersecting in theaters. Precise release plans will be announced at a later date. Sony is targeting 2027 for their release.

McCartney, Starr and the families of John Lennon and George Harrison have all signed off on the project through the band's Apple Corps. Ltd. Sony Music Publishing controls the rights



The Beatles address the media in the press room of Kennedy International Airport on their arrival, Feb. 7, 1964 in New York.

to the majority of Beatles songs.

"I'm honored to be telling the story of the greatest rock band of all time, and excited to challenge the notion of what constitutes a trip to the movies," Mendes said in a statement.

Each film will be from the perspective of a Beatle.

"We intend this to be a uniquely thrilling, and epic cinematic experience: four films, told from four differ-

ent perspectives which tell a single story about the most celebrated band of all time," said producer Pippa Harris. "To have The Beatles' and Apple Corps' blessing to do this is an immense privilege."

The Beatles' most famous forays into film were in their early years. Between 1964 and 1970, they appeared in five movies, including "A Hard Day's Night" (1964) and the animated "Yel-

low Submarine" (1968). They've, of course, been the subject of many documentaries, most recently Peter Jackson's 2021 "The Beatles: Get Back."

In 2023, the Beatles reunited with the aid of artificial intelligence in the newly released song "Now and Then." The recording was made possible by technology used by Jackson on "Get Back," and featured a music video made by the

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New Zealand director.

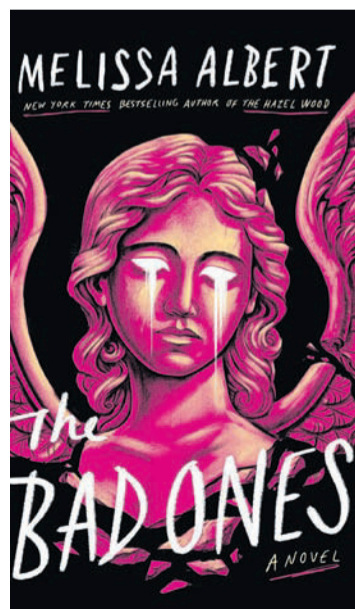
Attempts to dramatize the Beatles' story have been more sporadic and less impactful. A 1979 biopic, made when Lennon was still alive, called "The Birth of the Beatles" was produced with Beatles original drummer Pete Best as an adviser. The 1994 indie drama "Backbeat" chronicled Lennon's relationship with Stuart Sutcliffe before the Beatles were famous. "Nowhere Boy" (2009) starred Aaron Taylor-Johnson as a teenage Lennon.

But in the last decade, music biopics have become big business. Box-office hits like "Bohemian Rhapsody," "Rocketman" and "Elvis" have sent Hollywood executives chasing the next jukebox blockbuster. Over Presidents Day weekend, "Bob Marley: One Love," produced with the Marley estate, was the No. 1 movie in theaters.

A Michael Jackson biopic is in production.

"Theatrical movie events today must be culturally seismic. Sam's daring, large-scale idea is that and then some," said Tom Rothman, chair and chief executive of Sony Pictures' Motion Picture Group. □

## Melissa Albert's 'The Bad Ones' is a gripping story of friendship and the supernatural



This cover image released by Flatiron shows "The Bad Ones" by Melissa Albert. Associated Press

By DONNA EDWARDS  
Associated Press

Four people have disappeared in a single night, and Nora's best friend, Becca, is one of them. If they weren't three months into a huge fight, maybe Nora would be able to parse out the clues Becca left for her. Melissa Albert's fifth young adult novel, "The Bad Ones," is both chilling and heart-warming a story of limitless friendship clashing with fantastical supernatural power in the cold winter of a little Illinois town.

On the surface, Palmetto is the kind of unremarkable place that 17-year-olds Becca and Nora dream of leaving. But if you dig a little

deeper, you find a recurring pattern of strange disappearances, seemingly centered around the high school and dating back to the 1960s. The locals all know some version of the story, and that it birthed the "goddess game" that has been passed down through generations since. There are two iterations of this game, both Palmetto exclusives: a schoolyard jump-rope rhyme, and a trust-fall-style game of teenage daredevilry.

But Nora and Becca have their own connection with this supernatural side of Midwestern suburbia: a secret art series in which they've crafted dozens of

goddesses. Nora, lifelong storyteller and the main narrator of the novel, researches mythos to create their lore. Becca fluently wields her camera to illustrate each goddess' beauty and power.

The project started as a more grown-up way to carry on their childhood make-believe, but perhaps the Goddess Series holds as much power as Becca hoped and Nora feared. Nora follows Becca's clues like breadcrumbs around Palmetto, gathering stories shared by a population so realistically rendered that it's sometimes tough to remember it's fiction. Strange things are happening to

Nora, including hyper-realistic dreams and an insatiable sweet tooth, ramping up the urgency until we finally learn the truth behind the town lore and what really happened to the four who went missing without a trace in a satisfying, epic whirlwind of an ending.

The novel is freckled with alluring metaphors and the kind of grand revelations that flow through a perceptive, open mind. Albert's ethereal descriptions capture specific vibes as well as big-picture issues; the thickness of the air or the haunted way everything in the art wing of the old school seems slightly askew. □



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**Diggins-Smith finds a fresh start with the Storm. She'll get to play with Ogwumike and Loyd**

By **MARK MOSCHETTI**  
Associated Press

**SEATTLE (AP)** — Skylar Diggins-Smith knew she needed a fresh start. Now, she will get to have it while playing alongside WNBA scoring champion Jewell Loyd, former MVP Nneka Ogwumike and All-Defensive second-team rising star Ezi Magbegor in her first season with the Seattle Storm.

"I connected with one player very early in the process, and that was Jewell. And if I wasn't talking to Jewell, I was talking to Nneka," the 33-year-old Diggins-Smith said Monday as she and Ogwumike, who both signed with the Storm as free agents in early February, had their first formal meeting with local reporters.

Diggins-Smith sat out last season after giving birth to her second child. She subsequently had a falling out with the Phoenix Mercury and made clear that she was looking to go elsewhere. After averaging 19.7 points (third in the league), 5.5 assists (seventh) and 4.0

rebounds with the Mercury in 2022, the six-time All-Star and four-time All-WNBA first teamer was regarded as one of the top point guards available in this year's crop of free agents.

That position is one the Storm clearly needed to fill after Sue Bird, who led the team to four championships, retired following the 2022 season.

"You try to figure out how to play with players that you hate guarding or playing against," Diggins-Smith said. "My Option 1, Plan A was playing with (Loyd and Ogwumike). That's really important at this point of my career is to be around people that know me. Jewell knows me, and Nneka knows me."

Fourth-year coach Noelle Quinn, looking to lead her team back into the WNBA's upper echelon after last year's 11-29 campaign, sees Diggins-Smith as a perfect fit.

"The thing that is very advantageous about Skylar is she plays at both ends of the floor," Quinn said. "She's a hawk on defense,

and what she can do offensively is not only creating for herself but for others."

Ogwumike, 33, finished sixth in the WNBA for scoring (19.1) and rebounding (8.8) last season. The No. 1 overall draft pick and Rookie of the Year in 2012, she played all 12 of her pro seasons with Los Angeles. She was named the league

MVP in 2016, leading the Sparks to the championship.

Once the eight-time All-Star and four-time All-Defensive first-team selection started looking for a new home, she knew what she wanted.

"Ultimately, it came down to feeling like I was a priority here and not necessary

a piece to a puzzle," Ogwumike said. "I want to be able to be consistent and efficient, but I do want to bring a different level of dynamic play. I know that playing with and against Skylar and Jewell every day, and Ezi (Magbegor), Sami (Whitcomb) and Jordan (Horston) will make me a better player." □

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Seattle Storm General Manager Talisa Rhea, from left, players Nneka Ogwumike, Skylar Diggins-Smith and head coach Noelle Quinn talk at a press conference in Seattle, Monday, Feb. 19, 2024.

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## Golf has a fractured landscape. Not even the majors can put it back together

By **DOUG FERGUSON**  
AP Golf Writer

**LOS ANGELES (AP)** — The grill room at a California municipal golf course had one TV showing LIV Golf in Las Vegas, another showing the PGA Tour in Phoenix. A half-dozen people shifted eyes watching both, the former with fewer commercials on a network known more for "Young Sheldon" reruns.

This is the current landscape in golf, and it figures to be that way for the rest of this year and probably well into the next one, if not longer.

Consider the immediate future.

Rory McIlroy and Rickie Fowler will be in Florida next week the same time Brooks Koepka and Bryson DeChambeau are in Saudi Arabia. At least there is an eight-hour difference in time zones, assuming everyone has The CW app. For those who prefer to play the week before a major, LIV Golf will be on the Blue Monster at Doral ahead of the Masters and PGA Tour players will be in San Antonio. The week before the U.S. Open, LIV will be in Houston, the PGA Tour in Ohio for the Memorial.

All of which leads to the common refrain that all anyone wants is for the best players in golf to be on the same stage.

The only place for that is the majors, which always mattered more than all the other tournaments. Now the gap is getting larger.

The PGA Tour already has held three of its "signature events" with a \$20 million purse, cold plunges and wild-caught seafood served in player dining. Nothing felt extraordinary about them. LIV Golf had



**Xander Schauffele lines up a putt on the ninth green during the final round of the Genesis Invitational golf tournament at Riviera Country Club, Sunday, Feb. 18, 2024, in the Pacific Palisades area of, Los Angeles.**

Associated Press

a 59 and a playoff in the dark the first week, and a six-way tie for the lead late on the back nine the second week. The only noise sounded forced.

Golf has always had various starting lines depending on the level of interest. The most ardent fans tuned in for Kapalua and its magnificent ocean views for The Sentry to start the year. Torrey Pines is the first PGA Tour event on network television. Pebble Beach is the first weekend without the NFL (and more magnificent ocean views, even when the wind and rain cause waves to crash over the 18th fairway).

The Florida swing means the Masters is near. The Players Championship used to boast the strongest and deepest field in golf, a claim it can no longer make with 15 of the last 30 major champions (a total of nine players) now with

LIV. At least it still has the island green.

That brings us to the Masters. What poetically is referred to as the annual rite of spring might just as well be called the start of the golf season.

"Yes and no," Xander Schauffele said.

"If you just love golf, you should have no problem watching the LIV circuit on CW, and you should have no problem turning on CBS or Golf Channel when you watch the PGA Tour, LPGA, whatever you want," he said.

And now for the "no."

"If you want to see all the best in the world playing each other, then that would be your first tournament to watch," Schauffele said. "But even then, there are guys who should be at Augusta, arguably, based on how good they are. But they made the choice, rolled the dice and they're

not going to be there unless they win something crazy." Winning "something crazy" ostensibly would be a major, which comes with a five-year exemption to the other majors.

Still to be determined is whether Augusta National hands out special invitations and to whom, and whether the PGA of America will consider players from other tours, as Kerry Haigh, the chief championships officer, said last year it would.

Otherwise, it won't be long before the majors don't have all the best.

This would appear to be the final year for DeChambeau at Augusta National, being the fifth Masters he has played since winning the 2020 U.S. Open (the Masters was in November that year because of the COVID-19 pandemic). Cameron Smith has exemption through 2027.

Patrick Reed fell to No. 100 in the world ranking — he never did reach No. 5, after declaring himself one of the top five players in golf in 2014 when he was at No. 20. Depending on what happens in the Masters, he will be well outside the top 100 for the PGA Championship. The five-year exemptions for DeChambeau and Dustin Johnson at the PGA end after next year.

The Official World Golf Ranking hasn't found a way to fairly include LIV Golf in its system, and LIV Golf hasn't provided a reason with such a closed shop.

Is the OWGR fair? Yes. Accurate? Not so much. Johnson currently is at No. 238, right behind Ockie Struydom and Troy Merritt. But remember, the majors use the world ranking to determine their fields, and the heads of those organizations were the ones voting not to include LIV.

And so it's on to Mexico and Florida and Texas for the PGA Tour, to Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong for LIV, and everyone meets up at Augusta National in April.

Rory McIlroy said he thought a signature event would feel cheapened because not all the best players — Jon Rahm, Johnson, Koepka — were there.

It was a peculiar opinion because that doesn't always happen, anyway. Only five of the top 10 were playing when McIlroy won the Canadian Open in 2022. And even in a limited-field event like the CJ Cup in Las Vegas he won in the fall of 2021, Rahm, DeChambeau and Patrick Cantlay sat that one out. All were among the top 10 in the world.

All the best are found only at the majors. □